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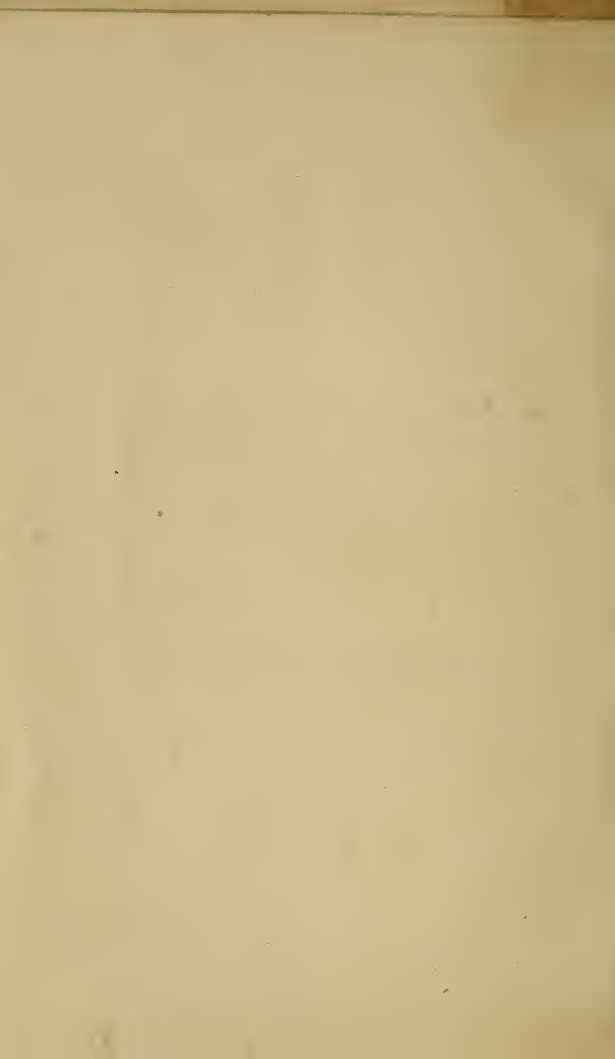


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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





• 1872 Binding front

NARRATIVE
OF THE
LOSS OF THE SHIP POLAND,

BY
Miss Margaret S. Hughes.

LETTER
FROM
CHRISTOPHER HUGHES
TO
The Hon. Joseph R. Ingersoll.

AN OFFERING TO THE
PENNSYLVANIA
Academy of the Fine Arts.



LETTER

OF

Miss Margaret Smith Hughes,

TO HER FATHER,

*Narrating the loss of the packet ship Poland, on her
way from New York to Havre, 16 May, 1840.*

AN OFFERING TO THE

Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts,

FROM

CHRISTOPHER HUGHES.



BALTIMORE:

PRINTED BY JOHN D. TOY.

1845

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Entered according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1845,

By CHRISTOPHER HUGHES,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Maryland.

DEDICATION.

TO

MY BELOVED OLD MASTER,

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS:

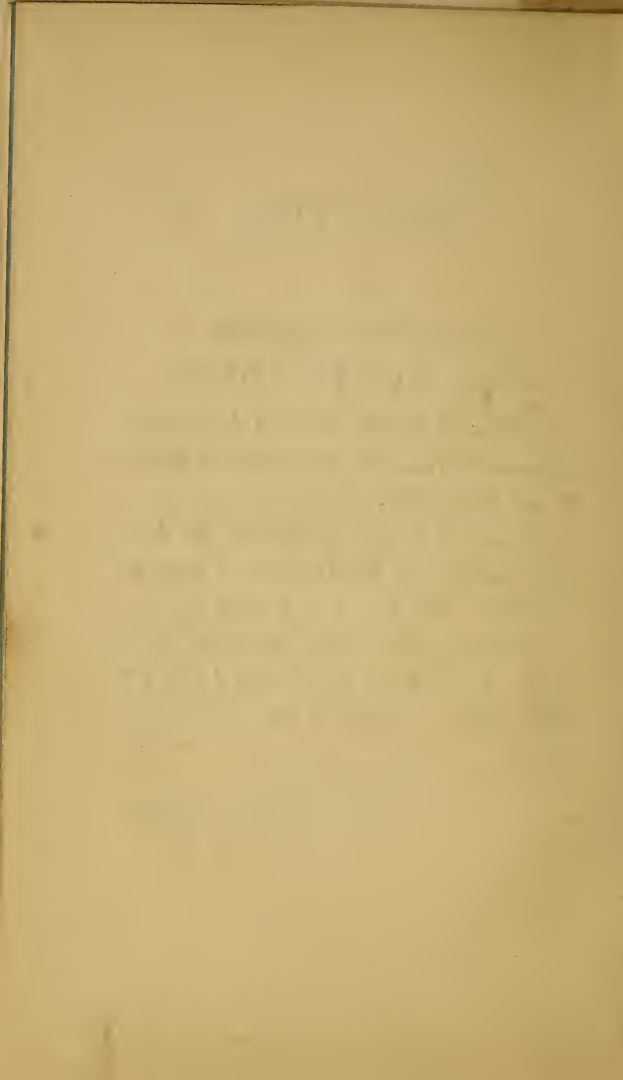
If there be a Man, whom I honour and venerate—"Thou art the Man." Let this be my testimonial.

If there be a Man—entitled to the Love and Gratitude of his Country—"Thou art the Man." Let who may gainsay it.

Remember!—you have promised me a Visit. I shall never forget—that I owe you every thing. Let this be my acknowledgment.

Your devoted Elève,

CHRISTOPHER HUGHES.



CHRISTOPHER HUGHES

TO

JOSEPH R. INGERSOLL,

PHILADELPHIA.

MY DEAR INGERSOLL,

You have been to me—a “guide, philosopher and friend” from our Princeton College days ; your very *name* has been a blessing to me ! you will see, in the simple and touching Letter of my Daughter—narrating the circumstances of the awful accident to the American Packet Ship, “The Poland,” Captain Anthony, on her voyage from New York to Havre, in May, 1840, when the ship was struck by Lightning—that—under Providence—I owe the preservation of my Daughter, to an “excellent, good-hearted man—*named* Ingersoll—Captain of the Ship Clifton.”

I now write under every disadvantage ! my house is thronged with welcoming and welcome visits, on the return of my Daughter to our home ! I am also in the midst of workmen, “setting my house in order”—after a very long absence ! If I write confusedly, you will be indulgent ; it is not *my* Letter that gives interest to this communication ; it is the Letter of my Daughter that will receive your attention and admiration ! This Letter (printed, but never published) has been read by hundreds of persons—much to the disapprobation of my good and gentle child—who meant it only for her Father’s Eye ! I have often been urged to publish it ; I will mention only one honoured Name—who enjoined this on me—with tears streaming down his intelligent and benevolent face—on the perusal of this Letter ! Washington Irving said to me—here at Baltimore—in 1842—“this beautiful Letter ought to be

given to the world; I have never read any thing more affecting and more interesting.” I now—without consulting my Daughter—have determined to publish it, and to devote its circulation in aid of your noble project of rebuilding your Academy of the Fine Arts! I have had some hundreds of copies printed! I send them to you, my Friend; they may sell at your approaching Fair for some small sum, which I beseech you to apply to the above named object.

I have added to the Letter copies of my own correspondence, which has been published in the Newspapers, touching the last act of my European Life, at the close of a long Diplomatic career of Thirty-two Years consecutive employment. My doing this may be criticized; but I can *stand that!* Many of my Friends—in your beautiful city—a city that I love next after my own native and glorious Town of Baltimore—many

of my Philadelphia Friends and their children—may even *like* to preserve this little record of my simple, but honest life! They will see that—as at the beginning, so at the end—of my long public life, I have been true to the wise and blessed Institutions of my Country! and my Friends—in your noble and really admirable Town—*know* that I have ever been *true to them!* Never was man more kindly, hospitably and affectionately treated, than I have been—from my youthful to my now advanced years—by my Friends in Philadelphia;—with You—my beloved Friend—at the head of the honoured, and I am proud to say, the numerous list!

I beg leave, in addition, to ask your acceptance, and for the same praiseworthy object, of two small walking canes, made of the oak of our Glorious Frigate Constitution. The piece of wood was given to me in 1834, by my late Gallant Friend, Commodore Hull; I

took it to England and had the canes manufactured, with a Portrait, in silver, of "Old Ironsides" on the head with the name of her immortal Commander, the Pride and Glory of our Proud and Glorious Navy. These canes in *certain* graceful and skilful hands, may do execution at your Fair; *id est*, they may *bring money!* and *that* is our object; but this is *a secret*.

I am interrupted every moment! I am now interrupted by the Printer, who calls for this Letter. I have not time to make it short!

I commend my small offerings to your kind acceptance, this hasty Letter to your merciful indulgence, and *myself*, to your continued affection, thou oldest, dearest, most honoured of my friends.

Vale et me ama,

CHRISTOPHER HUGHES.

BALTIMORE, ST. PAUL STREET,

1st October, 1845.

P. S. A great name, *in the Arts*—gives value to the Portrait of a very humble subject. In 1816 my Portrait was painted by *cur* Stuart, at Boston; and my Portrait was again painted at London in 1832, by my Friend—Sir Martin Archer Shea, President of the Royal Academy, and Successor to Sir Thomas Lawrence. If you think, that *either* of these works, of those two Great names—might be acceptable to your Academy—*on account of the Artist*,—I will send them *both* to you at Philadelphia, and you may take your choice. Yours, C. H.

N. B. I have two Snuff Boxes and the handle of a Seal—made out of the *same* piece of wood—given to me by my glorious old Friend and Companion, Commodore Hull. I doubt if I would *surrender* THESE even to the Batteries of “Old Ironsides” herself, if she were to “*open upon me*;” this is *not confidential*. C. H.

P. S. Some 16 or 17 years since, when I lived at Brussels—I happened to have a little interest with the then Lords of the English Admiralty; and through the kindness of one of them—my Friend, *the present* Lord Castlereagh,—I was the means of rendering a service to a Gallant Friend of mine—a Captain in the British Navy, who was engaged in a Survey of the Coast of Greece! in fact—I obtained for him (he had a large Family) some additional duties on the *same* service—which entitled him to an increased *per diem* pay of a Guinea or two! No small matter for the Captain! Many years after, and when I had forgotten the affair—I received a letter from him full of grateful sentiments. He had called a child after me; and he sent me a small Box of ancient Silver and Copper Coins. Will you, my friend, accept the Coins for your Academy? It is not impossible that the child—my Homonyme—may be had also—if

the desires of your Colleagues run in that Line ! at all events, I offer them my services in the search ; for, you know, I am now what is called—*désœuvré* ; anglice,—unemployed.

C. H.

COPY OF A LETTER

FROM

MISS MARGARET S. HUGHES,

ONE OF THE PASSENGERS IN THE SHIP POLAND,

(From New York to Havre,)

To her Father, Christopher Hughes,

AT STOCKHOLM.



ASTOR HOUSE, NEW YORK, }
26th May, 1840. }

THROUGH the goodness of God, my dear Papa, my life has been saved from a sudden and awful death, in the most trying and desperate circumstances, when the faintest hope had fled. Fearing that the news of our disaster might reach you before you heard from me of my safety, I decided to write directly, by the British Queen, and also take the liberty of directing to the care of Mr. Beasley, sup-

posing he would know if you were in Havre or not. So many false reports are always spread of every thing, I dread your hearing of the loss of the Poland, without, at the same time hearing, that all her passengers were saved.

I must begin at the beginning of my sad tale ; we sailed on the 11th of May, the wind was fair, the day fine, and all looked so bright before us ; by the next day we were fairly under way ; the following Saturday, the 16th, we had made a third of our way, when, at about three o'clock, P. M., we were struck by lightning ; there was but one clap of thunder, one flash of lightning, that seemed intended for us ; they searched for fire, as the cabin filled with smoke directly, but not till night, on opening the hold, did the smoke burst forth so violently, as to make it no longer doubtful that the ship was on fire. The Captain thought the fire would burst

forth, and decided that the long boat should be lowered and the women and children put on board; it was then nine at night; Mr. Wainwright, a passenger, called to me to put on the warmest things I had; but the morning had been so bad we were not even dressed, but all had on wrappers and shawls. The children were taken out of bed and rolled up in cloaks and blankets, and we were hurried on deck; the night was dark, the deck slippery, all looked like death; with some difficulty we were put into the boat; Mr. Wainwright, two children, Mr. Arfwedson, two children, myself, the nurses, and as many of the gentlemen as could; between twenty and thirty; we were so crowded, I could neither move hand or foot. They tried the dangerous experiment of throwing the boat astern and attaching her to the stern of the ship. There we remained, pitching about the ocean till morning.

Mr. Wainwright then went in a small boat to the ship; the Captain was trying to smother the smoke, and by not admitting any air, thought to put out the fire; they kept up our spirits by sending us word from the ship that matters were not worse. We remained in this state all day, Sunday 17th, and the following night; the sea and wind had been very high all the time; towards Monday morning, 18th, they both increased. Mr. Wainwright went on board, the Captain gave him his choice, to remain in the long-boat and be cut adrift (though he did not think the boat could live in so high a sea) or to return to the ship. Mr. W. said he would return. It was with great difficulty we were towed round the stern of the ship without running against her: on reaching the side there was no way of getting us up; as the wave would raise the boat the sailors would catch our hands and draw us up. On getting on the deck, dear Pa, the

good Captain met us with tears in his eyes ; till then, I had hope ; but as soon as I put my foot on the ship, I gave myself up for lost ; the heat was so great, the smell of smoke so overpowering, all looked like death ; I sat down on the deck to wait quietly for death, to choose fire or water. It seemed to me I could have done so with resignation, if it was the will of God to take me. I did not think of myself ; but only of you, my dear Papa, and I thought my heart would break. This was at seven in the morning, Monday 18th.

We set sail in hope of meeting a ship ; *this* was now our only hope—seeing a ship before night ; it was so faint a one, I did not even allow it to enter my thoughts. We sailed till about three, P. M., when the cry from the mast of “ship ahoy,” reached our ears. To describe my feelings at being rescued when on the very brink of death, with eternity before me, would be impossible, and therefore

I will not attempt it. I can never feel grateful enough to my God for having spared me to you, dearest Papa. We made for the ship with our signals of distress up; it proved to be bound for New York—the Clifton, merchant vessel, with 240 steerage passengers in the cabin. The Captain (an excellent, good-hearted man, named Ingersoll) told us to come on board his ship directly, and to bring all the provisions we could; this was one of our greatest dangers; the waves were mountain high; the little boats seemed almost to stand on end as we crossed, having sometimes to row half a mile. We all, however, 63 souls, reached the ship without so much as a scratch.

The Captain did all he could to make us comfortable; but the ship not being suited for cabin passengers, we were very uncomfortable; and, though nine days on board, were not at all rested. Our provisions held out, and we reached land yesterday. I attri-

bute our safety, under the goodness of God, to our Captain Anthony; his conduct was so self-possessed, so noble, and, in the most trying circumstances, so perfectly proper, too much praise cannot be given him. At one time Mr. Wainwright went from the ship to the long-boat, the Captain had bidden him farewell, saying, "if any were saved, he, Mr. W., stood the best chance; as to himself, there were too many to fill the boat, if the flames should burst forth, and that *he* would stay by the ship." He sent his love to the ladies, saying, "his last prayers and thoughts were for us." As for me, dear Papa, I did not lose my self-possession for a moment, and there was no time for fright. We were hurried on from one danger to another. Every moment brought with it a new danger; we were 36 hours in the long-boat, during which time every five minutes, we would be wet through by a wave; we were

near being swamped the first night; a plug came out, and a hole had been broken in the side of the boat, so it was fast filling with water when it was discovered. The mate put his hands in the hole; kept them there two hours, till the water could be bailed out. Of course, we lost everything, but the clothes on our backs. I did not even save my watch; but it seems almost wicked to regret anything, when we think of our wonderful escape. Could there be a more desperate situation than to be in the middle of the Atlantic, two days and nights, with a burning ship beneath you? Had we sailed from New York half an hour sooner, or later, we should have missed Captain Ingersoll; and had we not seen his ship, in a few hours it might have been too late; for, in the state the last man left the Poland, it was supposed, that before midnight she was destroyed. I regret my shawls and jewels on

your account, more than my own, as I know you valued them from association;* as to myself, I feel so thankful that my life is spared, and as if I could forswear finery and jewels for ever. I must get as few and cheap clothes as I can do with, and be very economical, to make up for all I have lost. I am worn out; I must go to-bed; I shall write to you by the Havre packet of the 1st of June, and tell you of all the kindness I have received—*it merits a letter*.

I expect some of them on from Baltimore for me to-morrow. I trust you may be able to read this; when you have, you will not wonder I should be worn out, in mind and body, after all I have gone through. I have only got a slight cold. Mr. Arfwedson is in his bed to-day; his wife and children quite well; they are very kind. I fear the non-

*Four hereditary Cashmere Shawls and Family Jewels.

arrival of the Poland may cause you uneasiness; but I pray not; as soon as you hear the news, you will know we are *all* saved. God bless you, my dear Papa; my disappointment is very great at not seeing you; this only makes me wish the more to be with you; but all is for the best.

Your affectionate daughter,

MARGARET SMITH HUGHES.



EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM SIR FRANCIS BUR-
DETT TO CHRISTOPHER HUGHES, AT LONDON.

EMBER COURT, 25th September, 1841.

(*Near London.*)

“MY DEAR MR. HUGHES.

“I am glad to receive your kind letter, and wish heartily the generality of your countrymen participated your feelings with regard to old England, where we think commonly so favourably of—and wish so well

to them. But this business of M'Leod is a sad affair, and I don't see how a rupture can be avoided," &c. &c. &c.

"I shall live on hope until Tuesday is over, and kill the fatted calf for that day; if a non-appearance is then entered, I shall, on Wednesday, come to town and take my chance to see you. Your bed will be prepared and all ready, and every one here happy to see you.

"I rejoice in the escape of your daughter; and what a daughter!! Were I a young man at liberty, I would go across the Atlantic only to see her. God bless her—as she is a blessing to you. Lady Burdett knows how to value the precious letter you sent her; we all feel alike upon it; the graceful simplicity of the style and noble sentiments expressed pourtray a mind so lovely and enchanting that one is lost in admiration and delight in the contemplation of it. It shows virtue her

own image in her most captivating form, and sheds a lustre around the whole sex. God bless her,—and send you safe home.

“To touch now upon any other subject would be flat, stale, and unprofitable. Adieu! The letter shall be framed and kept in my family archives, as a token, moreover, of the cordial friendship of an American and an Englishman.

“Yours truly—yea, most truly,

(Signed) “F. BURDETT.”

“N. B. I was much pleased to receive a remembrance from De Mornay.”*

* Count Charles De Mornay, French Minister at Stockholm.

LETTERS OF
GEN. DE LA SARRAZ AND C. HUGHES.

*From the Baltimore American of Saturday Morning,
September 20, 1845.*

Our respected townsman, the Hon. CHRISTOPHER HUGHES, whose arrival by the last steamer from Liverpool was duly noticed, has returned to take up his abode in our community, after a long series of years spent abroad in the diplomatic service, with honor and advantage to his country and credit to himself. The high esteem in which he was held by the Government of the Netherlands is shown by the annexed correspondence, copied from the National Intelligencer of yesterday:—*Amer.*

“Our readers will have observed among the names of passengers arrived in this country, by the late packets from Europe, that of

our respected fellow-citizen CHRISTOPHER HUGHES, late Chargé d'Affaires of the United States to the Netherlands. A friend has obliged us with a copy of the following correspondence, which shows the esteem which he enjoyed on the part of the Government, to which, he was accredited."—*Nat. Int.*

TRANSLATION of a note from his Excellency Lieutenant General DE LA SARRAZ, Minister of Foreign Affairs of his Majesty the King of the Netherlands, to CHRISTOPHER HUGHES, late Chargé d'Affaires of the United States at that Court. Received at Paris and answered from Liverpool.

THE HAGUE, July 24, 1845.

SIR: It is very agreeable to me to have to announce to you that it has pleased the King, my august master, to confer upon you the Cross of a Commander of the Order of the Oaken Crown, of which, I have the honour

to transmit to you the insignia, as well as the diploma of nomination.

I pray you to accept my sincere felicitations on this Royal favour; and I seize with eagerness this opportunity, to reiterate to you the expression of my regret, that your recall should deprive me, henceforth, of the pleasure of cultivating with you relations, of which, I shall always preserve a precious recollection.

Will you permit me to commend myself to your kind recollection, (*souvenir*,) and to offer to you the renewed assurance of the sentiments of my distinguished consideration?

DE LA SARRAZ.

TO MR. CHRISTOPHER HUGHES,

*Commander of the Order of the Oaken Crown, late
Chargé d'Affaires of the United States of America
at the Court of the Netherlands.*

MR. HUGHES'S REPLY.

LIVERPOOL, *August* 23, 1845.

MY DEAR GENERAL: I arrived here at five o'clock this morning from London, and at midday we are to be on board the steamer Great Western, for New York. Of course, this must be a hasty and informal letter. I pray you to show it to the King, with the assurance of my profound, and, let me venture to say, my affectionate respect.

I can never forget my happy life in Holland, nor the kind and gracious manner of the King on my taking leave of his Majesty. I shall ever pray for the prosperity of his illustrious house and for that of his honoured people. They are a model people for love of country, for loyalty to their good and

gallant Sovereign, and for unsurpassed good faith; *and such will they ever be.*

I left Paris for England on the fifth of August; on the fourth, my esteemed old friend, General Baron FÄGEL, your distinguished and popular Minister at the Court of the Tuileries, left at my lodgings your Excellency's letter, dated "The Hague, 24th July, 1845," announcing to me, that it had pleased the King, your august master, to confer upon me the cross of a Commander of His Majesty's Order of the Oaken Crown, and enclosing to me the insignia and the diploma of my nomination.

To be followed, after I had left Holland, and to a foreign land, by such a proof of the kind consideration of your Sovereign, is an honour which I know how to value, and I gratefully thank the King for the compliment: but I must decline accepting the nomination to be a Commander of the Order of the Oaken Crown.

The institutions of my country forbid its citizens from accepting or wearing any and *all* Orders of Knighthood or titles of nobility. I shall ever be obedient to the institutions of my country, from duty and from preference, whether I be in public, or (as I now am) in private life. I am not the less sensible to, and grateful for, the honour designed for me by the King: and I am sure that His Majesty will approve of my motives, in declining to accept this mark of his royal and gracious good will and kindness for your Excellency's most obedient servant and attached friend.

CHRISTOPHER HUGHES,

*Late Chargé d'Affaires of the United
States of America at the Hague.*

To His Excellency

Lieutenant General DE LA SARRAZ,

Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Hague.

APOSTIL.

Friday, 3d October, 1845.

I write “under the whip;” and besides, I have to correct the press; but, as I have begun, I will finish. My hand has fallen upon a few Medals—Bronze and Silver—of eminent men—some of whom, I had the honour to know; I beg respectfully to offer these to your Academy, in addition to the few Greek and Roman Coins. You will see among the Medals—an admirable likeness of the celebrated Sir Francis Chantrey; for many years I lived with Him—and I loved him—as a Brother. He gave me the Canova and the Walter Scott—who were his intimate

Friends! The Silver Medal of Gustavus III. is very like! So are those of the late King of the Netherlands—William the First—Count of Nassau—and of the great Painter, David.

Some day—when I shall be (where I am always most happy to be) under your hospitable Roof—my dear Ingersoll,—I will describe the other Medals—there are about a Dozen: I have not time. I shall be gratified, if your Academy will accept these trifles.

I have appended to the Narrative of my Daughter, an Extract from a Letter of my late lamented Friend—Sir Francis Burdett; I made him the visit;—and alas! it was the last time I saw that excellent and admirable man! For Twenty Years—I had (to use the old phrase) “a plate at his Table,” and lived with him, in intimacy and confidence.

So many of my Friends—at home and abroad—wished to have copies of my Daugh-

ter's Letter—that it went through several Editions,—though, it was never *published*. I send you all that remain of the last that was struck off! Place these also in the Booth, of your amiable Niece—Miss Wilcocks—Margaret's Friend,—perhaps, they may find purchasers, and bring something, to help the cause.

I could add many other “Extracts” from the Letters of my Friends on this subject, in terms of equal satisfaction,—it would make my work too large! There is one, however, whom I *will* name! Samuel Rogers! This Gifted and Good man doats upon my child. May Heaven bless him—and prolong his honoured life!!

I have even received letters from persons whom I have never seen,—who, on being permitted to read Margaret's Letter, have written to me for copies. If I were to mention the names of *some* who have expressed

their admiration of it—and their congratulations—on the merciful preservation of my Daughter—from the burning Ship, The Poland—it might look pompous! I fear I have already run some risk—on this score! The time is up.

I am your friend,

C. HUGHES.



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